

COMMUNITY NEWS

Hazelwood school honors Patriots' Day

In honor of Patriots' Day, members of the Florissant Valley Fire Protection District, and the Florissant Valley Police Department celebrated with Lusher Elementary, in the Hazelwood School District, with a flag ceremony. During the ceremony, students recited the pledge of allegiance and sang God Bless America.



Photo courtesy Hazelwood School District

8-year-old girl leading fight against bullies

The goal is to help people learn about resources and gain support from each other.



A family in Florissant said they almost lost their 8-year-old daughter after she contemplated suicide because she was bullied and assaulted at school.

Now, that young girl and her family have a mission: help other children and families dealing with the same issues.

Going to school is usually exciting for children and that's the way Mikaylah Norfolk used to feel. However, her parents said she was bullied so badly they had to pull her out of the Hazelwood elementary school where she was enrolled. Music, science and history are some of Mikaylah's favorite subjects. But her mom Monique Norfolk said now the third grader is homeschooled. It was a horrifying experience that led her here.

"We decided to homeschool our daughter because she was a victim of bullying," Norfolk said. She said the bullying got so bad that her daughter was eventually physically assaulted.

"A boy pushed me and he said I was in his seat in gym class and he kicked me," Mikaylah said. After a series of bullying incidents that led to physical and emotional sickness, her parents took action.

"Bullying doesn't just go away. The effects of it once it happens, it's long-lasting, those scars are really deep," Norfolk said.

Mikaylah's organization will host quarterly events for children and their families who've been victims of bullying.

The goal is to help people learn about resources and gain support from each other.

The first kick off event is on October 27 from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. at the at Centennial Commons in University City. For more information, [click here](https://www.ksdk.com/article/news/local/education/8-year-old-girl-leading-fight-against-bullies/63-599627762).

St. Louis Cub Scouts see growing number of girls joining

By Valerie Schremp Hahn
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

ST. LOUIS (AP) — The girls are Cub Scouting.

They're doing just what their brothers and male classmates do. They'll learn knife safety and make cars for the Pinewood Derby and earn badges for astronomy and Scouting heritage.

The Greater St. Louis Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America have signed up about 4,800 Cub Scouts since registration opened in August, and about 700 of those children are girls.

Last year, the Boy Scouts of America announced that girls can join, too. For now children in kindergarten through fifth grade can join Cub Scouts. In February, girls will be allowed to join the program for 11- to 17-year olds.

Kellen Skouby, 8, is a new Cub Scout. As soon as she learned she could be one, Kellen bugged her mother to sign her up.

"My brother does Cub Scouts, and he did all the fun activities," Kellen said at a recent Scout sign-up night at their den's base, Russell Elementary School in Hazelwood.

So she signed up, along with her triplet brother, Camden, and triplet sister, Brietta. Their mother, Denae, will be the girls' den leader and is relieved to have more of their activities in one place.

While Cub Scouts meet and do family activities as a pack, they will also meet in smaller, single-sex dens.

Chartering organizations can choose to have a pack of girl dens and boy dens, or all-girl dens or all-boy dens.

By sign-up night, Kellen had already downloaded the Cub Scout manual on her tablet. "I want to be an Eagle Scout," she said, already setting her sights on the prestigious award.

The girls are two of five girls signed up for Cub Scouts in the 55-member pack. Scouts are organized into packs, usually based at a school or church.

There are about 550 packs of Scouts in the Greater St. Louis Area Council, and almost 300 of them chose to register girls, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported.

When pack leaders in Hazelwood first met about the possibility of allowing girls, Assistant Cubmaster John Otte said the decision was a "no-brainer."

"We've always had the little sisters coming along to events," he said. "They just couldn't get the badges and recognition."

Many packs do group activities together, such as family campouts and Raingutter Regattas, the boat race equivalent to the Pinewood Derby model car races.

For the Bossler family of Shiloh, joining Cub Scouts was a matter of logistics. Lola, 6, wasn't able to join Girl Scouts because of other family commitments, and she always came along to her 9-year-old brother Lincoln's family scouting activities.

"She loves the hiking, camping and feels so proud to wear the uniform," Kim Bossler wrote in an email. "When we went to the Scout store this summer to purchase her tiger uniform, she was over the moon to see they had added a skort option for the girls."

Christine Rasure, spokeswoman for the local Boy Scout council, said that the council's camps already had facilities for males and females, though the change accelerates the need for more improvements already in the works.

The umbrella organization, Boy Scouts of America, and the Cub Scouts will keep their name. The Boy Scouts, which is the program for older children, will be known as Scouts BSA.

Barb Machalek's daughter Miranda, 10, joined Cub Scouts this year as part of a soft start program. Miranda's been around Scouts since she was a baby; she's also a Girl Scout. Her brother, Andrew, is 16 and has always been in Scouts. The family lives in Festus, and her all-girl den is in Pevely.

Machalek is both Miranda's Girl Scout leader and is involved in Boy Scouts at the district level.

"They're both good programs in their own way, and they offer different things," she said of both Scouting programs. "They both serve their purpose."

Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri CEO Bonnie Barczykowski said that they didn't expect to see any measurable impact on their membership, and that girl and adult numbers continued to rise.

"We believe Girl Scouts provides the BEST leadership development experience for girls," she wrote in a statement. "We are the girl experts! Only we bring more than a century of research-backed programming on how to best empower girls to lead, thrive and gain skills."

National reaction to the change was strong when it was first announced.

"The Boy Scouts' house is on fire," Girl Scouts of the USA told ABC News in a statement in October of last year. "Instead of addressing systemic issues of continuing sexual assault, financial mismanagement and deficient programming, BSA's senior management wants to add an accelerant to the house fire by recruiting girls."

Courtney Massey doesn't see why Cub Scouts and Girl Scouts can't coexist peacefully: She's the cubmaster for the co-ed den at Fox Elementary, as well as her daughter's Girl Scout leader. Her daughter, Marleigh, 7, is excited to be in the same den as her brothers Beau, 8, and Theodore, 10.

"There are a lot of families who are doing this. They love Scouts," Massey said. "They're not going to leave their troops. And really, how cool would it be if your girls got Gold and Eagle?" she said, referring to the prestigious awards given in Girl and Boy Scouting.

"It's exciting for me as a cubmaster to take the girls through a big part of history," she said.

Their den gathered to march in the Arnold Days parade on Sept. 16, girls and boys wearing the same uniform.

As they waited in a staging area, Clayton Messer, 12, pointed to the wording on Faylinn Amos' uniform. "See, it says 'Boy Scouts,'" he teased.

"Well, you've got a ponytail," she quickly retorted.

And the parade marched on.